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Letter from Brigadier General W. S. Featherston to Major G. M. Sorrel. 12 July 1862 30 June 1862

Winfield Scott Featherston

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Richmond July 12th 1862

Major G. M. Somers

A. A. G. of

Major Genl. Singsb's Division.

Sir:

Went 11 o'clock
with 29th Ind after crossing Beam Dam creek
My Brigade moved forward with General
Singsb's Division in the direction of Gaines
Farm, or local Centur. The Division was halted
near Hogan's Farm about one mile distant
from Gaines Farm. Soon after the Division was
halted, Genl Pryor was ordered forward with
his Brigade to Gaines house to draw back
some skirmishes and a body of the enemy
supposed to be in a skirt of woods near
the house. General Wilcox and myself
were ordered forward with our Brigades
to support him. The balance of the Div-
ision remaining in line at the Hogan Farm.
General Pryor advanced, General Wilcox
and my Brigade close in his rear. After
a sharp skirmish the enemy was ^{hand somely} driven
from the skirt of woods by General
Pryor's Brigade. The two Brigades were subjected
to a very heavy artillery fire from the enemy's
batteries ^{planted} on the other side of the Chickahominy.
They were therefore thrown back into the
woods to await further orders. In rear of
Gaines house, after the skirmishes had been
driven out from the skirt of woods, in front,
to await further orders. Here they remained
until about 4 o'clock in the evening when
they were ordered to advance

and made a joint attack upon the enemy
 who were posted on our side of the Chickahominy,
 south east of Gaines' line. These three
 Brigades, Wilcox's, Pryor's and my own consti-
 tuted the extreme right of our attacking col-
 umn, and was separated some distance
 from the balance of our attacking forces.
 General Wilcox was the senior Brigadier present
 and directed ^{the} movements. The three Brigades
 were thrown into line of battle near a ravine
 where they were ^{partially} protected in front from the
 fire of the enemy after they were formed
 in line of battle. They were ordered to move
 rapidly over the field in front some six
 or eight hundred yards to the edge of the
 woods where the enemy was posted. During
 this advance, they were exposed to a raking fire
 from the enemy's artillery in front as well
 as from ^{their} long Range Rifles. The advance
 was rapidly made, with unbroken lines,
 displaying an order and discipline that would
 have been creditable to the old day veterans.
 A more dangerous charge could not ^{have} been
 made by troops than the one made by these
 three Brigades on this occasion. The woods
 were reached with considerable loss on
 our rank, a murderous fire was
 opened upon the enemy by our men and
 they were driven back. Our men continued
 on entering the woods ravines & ditches
 and in pursuing the enemy through the woods
 had to ascend a steep hill, the course having
 been inward and shady. The enemy fighting

with great desperation were driven gradually
back from one position to another. First
from the edge of the woods, back behind
their works on the top of the hill, then their
works were stormed & taken. Several pieces
of which were passed on by my troops for numbers of prisoners
they were compelled to abandon on their retreat
and finally to flee in wild confusion.

Our troops held the ground and occupied
the encampments that night. The struggle
was a desperate one. From the time our troops
were ordered to advance until the close of
the fight, about 31 hours some they were opposed
by superior numbers, and exposed to the most
kind of an artillery & infantry fire. Whilst
these three Brigades were attacking the enemy
from the direction of Gaines house, our col
umn was moving simultaneously on our left.

A desperate battle was fought all along
raging all along our line

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Our loss was heavy in this engagement, but it is
believed the enemy suffered much more severely,
notwithstanding the fight under cover of ^{his} ~~the~~
works which being advanced on the ground,
and with the additional ^{a position for his artillery} advantages of
~~the~~ ^{an} artillery whilst ours was of little
service. ⁱⁿ ~~it~~ I regretted to lose in this engagement
Major Mullins in command 14th M. P. Regt.
who was severely, though not mortally, wounded.
A list of the casualties in the different
Regiments is herewith transmitted, also a
list of those who were particularly dis-
tinguished in the action. To the members of my
staff who were present Capt Parker & St.
Redding ^(St. Sykes having been sent by Richmond and by me) I am indebted for the promptness
and coolness with which all orders
were executed. To the Commissary Depart-
ment under charge of Major Partridge, and
the Medical Department under charge of
Dr. Craft, and the Quartermaster's Depart-
ment under charge of Major Bunkdale
we were greatly indebted for the industry
and attention displayed by them in supplying
our wants in their respective Departments.
All of which is Respectfully submitted.

W. S. Franchester Brig. Genl.
Commanding 6th Brigade
Longstreet's Division

Battle of Hains
Jensen or boat
Harbour, 27th
of June 1862,
around Richmond
Va.

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Gains' mills
or coal harbour

□

to be inserted on 4th page - 2^d fight)

which commanded ~~every~~ ^{the entire field occupied} position that could be
by our troops. I ordered Capt Smith's Battery
to be planted on a hill not far from
Gamis' Barn. ~~The~~ most commanding position
that could be found on the open field
in which we were marching. From this position
he fired several times at the enemy immediately
in his front & several distances to our
right in the woods.